

# CONFEDERATE CHOCTAWS.

## Their Old Commander Tells of Their Services in Alabama.

Sunday News.

To the Editor of Sunday News: Private information has reached me that inquiry appeared in a former issue of your paper asking who commanded the 18th battalion of Confederate cavalry and where was it organized? In addition to this several personal friends and Confederate comrades, knowing of the merits of this command and believing that there are features of special interest that should not be lost to the history of the late civil war, insist that I should respond freely and give to the public some chief points of my war life and the work of the 18th battalion, and also the 1st battalion of Choctaw Indians, commanded by myself in conjunction with my 18th battalion of Confederate cavalry, I therefore send to you an epitome of what I hope will suffice for the present, with the promise of a more elaborate detail later on, and in a more substantial form than a mere newspaper communication.

S. G. SPANN.

Sumter, S. C., January 30, 1900.

### THE CALL TO WAR IN ALABAMA.

On the 11th day of January, 1861, Alabama, my adopted State, seceded from the Union. In the same month and year I, then a planter, residing in Dallas County, near Selma, volunteered as a private and joined Capt. William Boyles's cavalry company, known as the Mobile Dragoons, on the Gulf coast, near Mobile. Capt. Boyles was a prominent lawyer of the Mobile Bar at that time. After serving twelve months the company reorganized with Capt. J. H. Marshall, a noted wholesale merchant of Mobile, as captain. He was wounded in the Shiloh battle, Miss., fight, with the 9th Connecticut, and was so disabled that he never rejoined his command. Capt. Boyles was authorized by the war department to raise a regiment. He succeeded in doing so. This command was known as the 56th or 57th Alabama cavalry.

After serving in Marshall's company a part of the ensuing year, and being anxious to see more active service, the coast service consisting entirely of scout, reconnoitering and skirmish engagements, I procured a substitute to take my place in the dragoons and accompanied Gen. J. W. Hardee through Bragg's memorable march into Tennessee and Kentucky. Hardee was then moving northward, via Mobile, Meridian and Selma.

By way of digression I here say that Gen. Hardee's plantation and my plantation, in Dallas County, Ala., joined with only a dividing fence between; hence our personal intimacy, and as a further digression I should say that my substitute made a gallant and faithful soldier to the end.

In the meanwhile I was in active duty in Kentucky and Tennessee, as an evidence of which I refer to the Atlanta Constitution, the Selma Reporter, the Chattanooga Rebel and other newspapers of October, 1862 date, for a full account of the battle of Perryville, Ky., in which S. G. Spann, of Alabama; J. Roshelle, of Louisiana, and Johnson, of Georgia, (Christian name not remembered,) distinguished themselves for valiant conduct; for which conduct Hardee and several other officers signed a written commendation of S. G. Spann to the confidence of the Secretary of War. On the faith of this paper I presented myself at the office of the Secretary of War, in Richmond, Va., to whom I was introduced by my old friend and classmate, the Hon. A. H. Garland, then Senator from Arkansas.

The following is a copy of the document authorizing the enlargement of my usefulness, and speaks for itself; the original I hold in my possession:

Confederate States of America, War Department, Adjutant and Inspector General's Office, Richmond, Va., April 21, 1863.—Authority is hereby granted to S. G. Spann to raise for the service of the Confederate States a company from the inhabitants east of the Mississippi River, as scouts or such other service as they may be assigned to.

After the company is raised Mr. Spann may proceed, if he can, to organize first a battalion and then enlarge that battalion to a regiment.

The organization when raised will be mustered into service, and copies of the muster rolls forwarded for file in this office. It will be subject to the rules and regulations governing the provisional army of the Confederate States.

By command of the Secretary of War, Samuel W. Melton, Major and A. A. G. S. G. Spann, present.

Pursuant to the foregoing authority, I first organized a company in Mobile, with headquarters at Stone Street Redoubt; Lieut. Ed. Kieth as drill mas-

ter; John C. Ransom, A. Q.; Gen. Dabney H. Maury, department commander. I then proceeded to raise other companies to form a battalion of mounted cavalry. This I succeeded in perfecting, with J. M. Tindal as captain of Company A, S. A. D. Steel as captain of Company B, M. M. Burke as captain of Company C, and John Harrison as captain of Company D.

In the outset this command was gotten up with the expectation of operating under orders of Gen. Hardee, as indicated above. But Gen. Hardee was transferred to the Eastern division, which changed the nature of service and opened new territory for future operations. The above named companies were ordered to Tuscaloosa, Ala., where, in September, 1863, the command was duly organized, with S. G. Spann major. The muster rolls were formally made out, copies of which were forwarded to the Secretary of War. Tuscaloosa was the gateway into Northwest Alabama.

It was at Tuscaloosa that the Confederate States Military Academy was established. The chief cotton, wool and shoe and hat factories were located there. The iron bridge across the Black Warrior River connected the western and eastern sections of Alabama at this point. The enemy had made frequent raids in that vicinity and the city was on several occasions under imminent danger of being captured. Gen. N. B. Forrest was stationed at Okolona, Miss., Gen. G. J. Pillow was stationed at Montgomery, Ala., and I was stationed at Tuscaloosa, Ala., with instructions from Gen. Maury to report ready for duty to both Gen. Forrest and Gen. Pillow, who were about equally distant from Tuscaloosa. This was promptly done. My command up to this time was known as "Spann's Battalion of Independent Scouts." Gen. Pillow objected to the style as calculated to mislead and produce confusion. He therefore advised that the command should take some numerical designation. No objection being interposed, the command was called the 18th Confederate cavalry, and forwarded with Gen. Pillow's recommendations to S. Cooper, A. and I. General, Richmond, that in future "Spann's Battalion of Independent Scouts" should be known as the 18th Confederate cavalry, and it so appeared in my subsequent reports.

Now that the main forces of Confederate troops had been transferred to Eastern fields of action, all North Alabama was subsequently exposed to Federal raids and depredations by deserters and Union sympathizers who had organized into bandits and highway robbers generally.

This battalion had hardly gotten into fighting trim when a squad of reconnoitering scouts dashed into camp and reported two Federal raids heading towards Tuscaloosa, one under command of Federal Col. Grierson, and the other under command of Federal Col. Strait. Gen. Forrest had received simultaneous notice of their approach and at once intercepted them at Sand Mountain, North Alabama, where he gained a signal victory with only slight casualties, himself receiving a wound in the heel. The 18th battalion, being skillfully deployed along the Watermelon Road, leading down to Tuscaloosa from the direction of the fight, rendered efficient service against detached squads of the enemy. The thanks of the city officials, and professors of the State cadets, and the superintendents of the various factories were cordially tendered this battalion. Gen. Forrest's command, after this engagement, moved to the front, but this battalion continued in Tuscaloosa and in the immediate support of Gen. G. J. Pillow's orders.

For the more effectual execution of the duties developed upon me I issued several general orders, defining the requirements of the law of exemption and conscription, also an appeal to the deserters then in hiding and who could not be reached by the ordinary process. These orders and appeals were published in the Tuscaloosa Observer, and also in hand bills for more effective distribution.

Just at this juncture another dark speck of turbulence showed itself in South Alabama and East Mississippi. About one hundred Choctaw Indians had been mustered into the Confederate service under Capt. J. W. Pierce, an excellent and brave officer, but a camp feud sprang up and many of his Indian braves mutinied, which threatened his destruction and their desertion to the enemy. To avert this impending calamity all his commissioned officers (white) and non-commissioned officers (Indians) petitioned Adj. Gen. Cooper to have their commands transferred to my command and personal charge as dismounted scouts. This

petition was granted and I established two camps of Choctaw warriors, one at Mobile, Ala., and one in Newton County, Mississippi, on the Meridian and Jackson Railroad. This command was styled 1st battalion of Choctaw Indians.

In a short time over three hundred warriors were enrolled and ready for service. Unfortunately, however, a part of the Indians, while reconnoitering near Lake Ponchartrain, were drawn into action before they were thoroughly drilled in the manual and skirmish tactics.

New Orleans was then in the hands of the Federals and their gunboats plied the coast along the Mississippi, and the Federal soldiers penetrated the interior. During one of their landings Company A, commanded by Capt. B. Duckworth, First Lieut. Calvin Doolittle, Second Lieut. R. H. Welsh, Third Lieut. W. Cunningham, First Corp. G. Ainsworth; Company B, Capt. Thomas Pearce, First Lieut. Mobly, Second Lieut. Furlow, Third Lieut. John Harrison, First Corp. William Robinson, together with their non-commissioned Indian officers and sixty-three privates, engaged the enemy, who had landed in superior forces near Lake Ponchartrain. During this conflict these Indian braves fought nobly. But the skill of the enemy and their superior numbers and quality of arms were too much for them. Mobly and Pearce, together with seventeen warriors, were captured and placed aboard the Federal gunboat, Maple Leaf, and taken to New Orleans. Pearce and several of the Indians escaped and returned to camp. The balance were carried to New York city and exhibited as curiosities.

"Indian Warriors in Confederate Uniform!" This line furnished an amusing headline to the great dailies of the North.

This portion of the Choctaw battalion became greatly demoralized. Several of their leaders went to Mobile and employed Percy Walker, a prominent lawyer at the Mobile Bar, to procure their release from service.

To prevent complications and consequent entanglement of the Indians against the Confederacy I promptly advised their full payment and honorable discharge from the service. This was done at once. The other two companies of Indians continued in service, engaged only in scout and reconnoitering duties; piloting Confederate scouts and giving notice of Federal encroachments, which became of frequent annoyance after the fall of Vicksburg. I have elaborate data and propose to give the redskin braves and their excellent commanders conspicuous mention in my forthcoming "Four Years' Life in Camp." The historian who presumes on placing a history of the civil war before the world with the omission of Spann's battalion of Choctaw Indians will do himself an injury and a band of brave warriors a serious wrong.

The 18th battalion of Confederate cavalry continued to do desultory service in both offensive and defensive warfare in North Alabama. When Gen. Pillow, with his brigade, was ordered to take the field, I applied for admission into his brigade, but the officials of Tuscaloosa petitioned the war department to forbid this battalion's departure from their midst. This request was acceded to by the department. All these matters, and much more, which constitute the part I took, will be set forth more elaborately in due course of time.

As an evidence of the strong brotherly attachment that those brave, crude, full-blood Indians cherished for Confederate soldiers, I here instance one event that occurred near my Indian camp, in Newton County, Miss. A freshet was on and the water in Chunky River was running above the railroad bridge, trains came loaded with soldiers going toward Vicksburg. The train plunged into the river, precipitating many soldiers into the raging waters. I was present at my Indian camp during this catastrophe and ordered my Indians to hasten to the rescue. Without an instant of hesitation over one hundred of these noble braves plunged into that turbulent river and rescued all the soldiers alive, except twenty-one, whom they brought out upon the bank lifeless and placed them side by side. After identification these unfortunate soldiers were crudely buried. The greatest interest was manifested by these Indians in their voluntary act of humanity as well as their pride of courage and respect for their commander. This incident can be vouched for by living witnesses, who now reside in the vicinity.

We must remember that the best history is that history which does not omit the minor details of even the most humble factor that helped to make up the grand whole. The tiniest rill pours its living current into some other stream, which helps to make the great rivers that fill the mighty ocean; so, when the best history of the war between the States shall have been published the humblest Confederate soldier whose readiness to do his duty at all times on the battlefield as a soldier, though lacking often the opportunity to prove it, shall claim a conspicuous and honorable place in its pages.

With this spirit, future pages shall

embrace not only the part I took, but particularly the heroic deeds of comrades with whom I claim the honor of having shared the four years' perils of a soldier's life.

By way of postscript, my surrender was at Mobile, Ala., July 10, 1865—I retained all equipment, side arms, etc.

### Don't Burn a Light at Night.

The following advice from the Indiana Farmer should be read and remembered by many families:

The habit is growing, I find, of housekeepers burning a light at night, so that in case of accident one will be in waiting. It is much better to have lamp and matches convenient, so that a light can be had in a moment. Some to save kerosene bills, keep the wick turned low, and this is far more harmful in its effects than if burning full size. One lamp burning consumes more oxygen than several pairs of lungs, and the effect upon nervous people is to be deplored. It is nervous people who are most likely to fall into this bad habit. I know one young woman who burns a lamp all night long through the hot Summer, with doors and windows closed, because if ventilation is allowed the insects will fly in, which make so much annoyance. When reasoned with upon the bad habit, she said that the baby cried for it. And he cries and frets all day because of the imperfect rest at night. I think it would be better to let him cry a few nights, and have the entire household rest better thereafter, besides the great gain in both mother's and baby's health.

Physiology is taught in our public schools, and yet our young people graduate and go out to destroy the comfort of homes and loved ones by a disregard of its plainest laws.

Mrs. Calvin Zimmerman, Milesburg, Pa., says, "As a speedy cure for all coughs, colds, croup and sore throat One Minute Cough Cure is unequalled. It is pleasant for children to take. I heartily recommend it to mothers." It is the only harmless remedy that produces immediate results. It cures bronchitis, pneumonia, grippe and throat and lung diseases. It will prevent consumption. Evans Pharmacy.

— Try throughout life to make friends. Enemies will make themselves. And the truest companion is he who most enjoys solitude.

"I used Kodol Dyspepsia Cure in my family with wonderful results. It gives immediate relief, is pleasant to take and is truly the dyspeptic's best friend," says E. Hartgerink, Overisel, Mich. Digests what you eat. Cannot fail to cure. Evans Pharmacy.

— The world is calling for American manufactures at the rate of over \$1,000,000 a day.

A. R. DeFluent, editor of the Journal, Doylestown, Ohio, suffered for a number of years from rheumatism in his right shoulder and side. He says: "My right arm at times was entirely useless. I tried Chamberlain's Pain Balm, and was surprised to receive relief almost immediately. The Pain Balm has been a constant companion of mine ever since and it never fails." For sale by Hill-Orr Drug Co.

— More than 13,000 Michigan farmers raised sugar beets for the first time last summer.

Rheumatism is a throughout, permanent, constitutional cure for rheumatism. The acids in the blood which cause the disease are thoroughly eradicated. It is also the best blood purifier, laxative and tonic. Evans Pharmacy.

— A trained rat is a pet in the family of Forbes Baker, of Steuben, Me. A Maltese cat caught it last winter, and brought it up with a litter of kittens. In time it learned to catch mice, and is a capital mouser.

— Doctor—Well, my fine little fellow, you have got quite well again! I was sure the pills left for you would cure you. Did you take them in water or in cake? "Oh, I used them in my pop-gun."

### Cursed 'em and They Started.

Some 50 years ago there lived in northern Virginia a spirited old gentleman by the name of Colonel Carter, whose habitual profanity made him notorious throughout the neighborhood. Pleadings and expostulations were equally vain to break him, and his friends as last hopelessly gave him up as one to whom swearing had become a second nature. In the course of time, however, the Methodists held a revival in the neighborhood, and much to the surprise of every one, Colonel Carter became converted of his sin and made a profession of religion.

The next morning, in the woodshed, he interviewed his negro teamster to the effect that there was to be no more swearing, not even at the horses. The teamster, who was about as much addicted to the habit as his master, was at first incredulous, and thought the whole matter a huge joke; but finding the colonel to be in earnest, he promised to do his best in the future to manage the team without using profane language.

"But 'tain't no use, nohow, massa," he said in parting, "you dun train dem horses up to it yo'self, an' de ain't gwine to go without it."

A week later the Colonel and his teamster started out for Alexandria with an extra heavy load of wheat. The teamster guided the horses over the rough and hilly road while the Colonel rode alongside on horseback. All went along smoothly at first, and the Colonel had begun to eloquently expound the beauty of chaste language when they struck a steep hill and the horses stalled.

"Now don't get angry, John," said the Colonel; "just speak to them gently and they'll start again."

But the team refused to budge. Coaxing, patting, scolding, lashing, were equally without avail. The colonel grow perceptibly red and nervous, and the teamster had great drops of sweat on his brow.

"Tain't no use tryin' any mo'," yelled the angry negro, "I dun tote you dis de way it gwine be!"

"Well, John," replied the colonel, in desperation, "I'll just ride ahead a little bit, and you see if you can't get these horses started and overtake me."

And John did.

— A man never looks behind the door unless he has been there himself.

— Covetousness is as much a form of idolatry as bowing down before idols of wood and stone.

### — THE —

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